

A great deal is said, nowadays, about the excellent prospect of an immediate peace; and, as the people evidently desire it, the extra newspaper folks are busy manufacturing and selling rumors to that effect. We see at present (says the North American) no reasonable grounds for such anticipations. The situation of the Mexicans in regard to their ability to maintain the contest at this moment is analogous to that of the Americans after General Howe had captured Philadelphia, our capital and seat of government. Our forefathers were not beaten, nor had they any thoughts of being beaten. They moved their Congress to Lancaster, rolled up their sleeves, and went at the work anew. The British spent the winter dancing, frolicking, and performing plays and *Meschanzas*, till they had run their Government in debt to a most frightful amount—an amount which staggered even the money-spending British Parliament. The country people about Philadelphia, meanwhile, were paid in guineas for whatever they sold to the enemy.

The parallel between this state of affairs and the present state of affairs in Mexico is not quite complete; but it bids fair to become so. Already we hear that Congress will assemble in some provincial town. General Scott will enter gloriously into the capital and his army will revel gloriously in the "Halls of the Montezumas." They will pay gloriously for all they buy with Brother Jonathan's golden eagles and hard dollars; and the result will be a glorious national debt of about five hundred millions of dollars, at the least.

Mr. Polk, no doubt, is sick of the war—a great deal sicker than the Mexicans. The fact is, when he least expected it, he has caught a Tartar. We all remember the story: "Captain, I have caught a Tartar." "Fetch him along, then." "He won't come." "Come along yourself and leave him." "I can't—he won't let me." It is an awkward predicament for a President to be in, and he has the compassion of all Christian people. "But the war," say its advocates, "has brought us so much glory!" True. Whig captains fight well. There is no denying that. But glory is an expensive article, and the people are beginning to regret that their President had not regarded the following prudent piece of advice given us in the Edinburgh Review some time ago:

"We can inform Jonathan what are the inevitable consequences of being too fond of glory—TAXES upon every article which enters into the mouth, or covers the back, or is placed under the foot; taxes upon every thing which it is pleasant to see, hear, feel, smell or taste; taxes upon warmth, light, and locomotion; taxes on every thing on earth and the waters under the earth; on every thing that comes from abroad or is grown at home; taxes on the raw material; taxes on every fresh value that is added to it by the industry of man; taxes on the sauce which pampers man's appetite and the drug that restores him to health; on the ermine which decorates the judge and the rope which hangs the criminal; on the poor man's salt and the rich man's spice; on the brass nail of the coffin and the ribbons of the bride; at bed or board, couchant or levant, we must pay. The schoolboy whips his taxed top; the headless youth manages his taxed horse with a taxed bridle on a taxed road; and the dying Englishman, pouring his medicine, which has paid seven per cent, into a spoon that has paid fifteen per cent, flings himself back upon his chins bed which has paid twenty-two per cent, and expires in the arms of an apothecary who has paid a license of a hundred pounds for the privilege of putting him to death. His whole property is then immediately taxed from two to ten per cent. Besides the probate, large fees are demanded for burying him in the church; his virtues are handed down to posterity on taxed marble, and he is then gathered to his fathers to be taxed no more. In addition to all this, the habit of dealing with large sums will make the Government avaricious and profuse, and the system itself will infallibly generate the base vermin of spies and informers, and a still more pestilential race of political tools and retainers of the meanest and most odious description; while the prodigious patronage which the collecting of this splendid revenue will throw into the hands of Government will invest it with so vast an influence, and hold out such means and temptations to corruption as all the virtues and public spirit, even of republicans, will be unable to resist.

"Every wise Jonathan should remember this."

What England is America may yet become, if the lust of conquest is cultivated by her rulers and sanctioned by her people. This was already covered over a hundred millions of dollars, and its expense will go on increasing as long as it continues in a quadrupled ratio. Standing armies are to be maintained at an immense cost; thousands of military and naval officers must subsist on the public purse, and crowds of contractors will drain the public treasury. We ask the people of Pennsylvania—the tax-paying people—to think of this, and to determine whether they will encourage that state of things which the reviewer so graphically describes. The approaching election will be regarded as a test, and should Mr. Shunk succeed his success will be claimed as an evidence that the National Administration, with its myriad costing war, and all its other outrages, have the confidence of our farmers and working men.—*North Amer.*

GEN. SCOTT.—We were sorry to read, a short time since, in the *New Orleans National*, a bitter and most unjustifiable attack upon Gen. Scott. It is sufficient answer to those who attempt to deprive him of his hard-earned laurels to adduce the concurrent opinions of all impartial persons, that in every situation in which he has been placed he has always exceeded the most sanguine predictions. In truth, by his masterly skill in combination, and by his sagacity in anticipating results, he has more than half won every battle in which he has been engaged before the commencement of actual conflict.

His personal courage has been proved in many an instance; and yet there are some envious detractors who accuse him, as many did Napoleon, of cowardice. The hero of Lundy's Lane and Bridge-water, however, needs no defender against such atrocious calumny; like the conqueror at Lodi and Arcole, he can appeal from the malice of the few to contemporaneous or future history. The annals that doubt of Scott's bravery will confess their compiler a reckless calumniator.—*N. Y. Tribune.*

We again repeat to our Maryland Whig friends that the Democrats are striving might and main to carry the Congressional elections. They have the whole State mapped out. They have the name of every voter in the State recorded. They have counted noses. They know what number of votes in given precincts is required to carry the day. They have the material ready to give those votes. They intend to strip the strong Democratic precincts as far as they dare strip them, and strengthen the weak ones in the districts they propose to carry. Voters from other States and from this District will be poured into Kennedy's district and others. Nay, they have been poured into them. It is necessary, the polls will be occupied by Democratic force so as to drive away Whig voters. Mr. KENNEDY they are resolved to defeat, if human power can do it. The Administration wants the House of Representatives, and they intend to get it, if corruption of the ballot-box will give it to them. Let our friends, therefore, be on the alert. Let them guard their rights as they do their lives, and all will go well.

CONVICTS SENT TO THIS COUNTRY.—From a Police report in the *New York Tribune*, we learn that a German named Christian Beckstein was arrested not long since in Utica for theft, who confessed that he had been three times imprisoned in Germany for a similar crime, and had been discharged on condition that he would come to this country.

AN ANCHOR TO WINDWARD.

It was but the other day that the Government organ declared the Whigs would be entirely responsible for all the consequences of a protracted war with Mexico, if peace should not follow the negotiations then in hand.

It states that "Gen. Scott had no instructions to grant an armistice—or we ought rather to say, to suspend hostilities—until a treaty of peace had been ratified on the part of Mexico." And it further says: "We may be permitted to repeat, that it would be most unfortunate if Mr. Trist should permit the negotiation to be spun out beyond the shortest possible time. We may add, it is to be regretted that as long a period as forty-eight hours after the negotiation had terminated has been allowed for the resumption of hostilities."

Is it not evident, from all this, that if evil should come from delay afforded the Mexicans to negotiate, an effort will be made to throw the blame on Gen. Scott?

Now, is it not supremely ridiculous to hear persons snugly ensconced at home, feeding on Government pay—out of the reach of danger, and consequently unqualified to judge—setting themselves up as critics upon a subject utterly beyond the scope of an impartial mind?

Can it be supposed that Gen. Scott, surrounded as he is with high-spirited and intelligent officers, would be blind to the true interests of the country, and to the glory of the arms entrusted to his command? The only just method of criticism would be to send the grumblers to the army to take part in its dangers and toils, and let them give practical evidence of their ability to correct blunders and achieve greatness.—*Richmond Republican.*

SANTA ANNA—WHAT HAS BEEN SEEN.

President Polk, in his annual message of December 7, 1846, said:

"When orders were issued to the commander of our naval forces in the Gulf, on the 15th day of May last, only two days after the existence of the war had been recognised by Congress, to place the coast of Mexico under blockade, he was directed not to obstruct the passage of Santa Anna's fleet, should he return." It remains to be seen whether his return may not yet prove favorable to a pacific adjustment of existing difficulties."

SANTA ANNA being thus passed into Mexico by President Polk, to "aid and comfort" the "poor miserable Mexicans," let us inquire what we have seen of the things the President told Congress remained "to be seen."

At the battle of Monterey, in September, 1846, we have seen five hundred American soldiers left on the field, killed and wounded.

At the battle of Buena Vista, in February, 1847, where Santa Anna commanded, we have seen seven hundred American soldiers left on the field, killed and wounded.

At the battle of Cerro Gordo, where Santa Anna also commanded, we have seen six hundred American soldiers left on the field, killed and wounded.

At the battle of Churubusco, where Santa Anna, with Valencia, commanded, we have seen one thousand and seventeen American soldiers left on the field, killed and wounded.

We have seen the loss of these twenty-eight hundred and seventeen American soldiers, with a host of others killed and wounded by this "aid and comfort" to the enemy, and still "it remains to be seen," as much as it did when President Polk sent in his message last December, whether Santa Anna's return, by Mr. Polk's agency, "may not prove favorable to a pacific adjustment of existing difficulties." And "it remains to be seen," also, how much longer he may continue the war, organize new armies, and give us battle, and how many more American soldiers he may kill.

OCEAN STEAMERS.—LAUNCH OF THE HERMAN.—The splendid new steamship *Hermann* was launched at New York on Thursday afternoon, from the ship-yard of Westervelt & McKay, at the foot of Seventh street, East river.

The first of the Ocean Steam Navigation Company's ships having been named after the Father of America, they have called the second the "Hermann," after the Father of Germany, in compliment to our German fellow-citizens, who have so nobly contributed their aid towards the undertaking, and as an appropriate acknowledgment of the substantial proofs given to us of the friendship of the city of Bremen and the German States generally, and of the enthusiasm with which they have welcomed the establishment of a direct steam mail line between the United States and Germany.

We have now ample evidence (says the Commercial Advertiser) that when the aid of Government is extended to our enterprising citizens, as by other Governments to their subjects, ocean steamships will rise up and compete with, if not surpass, those of other nations—giving our Government a fleet of steam-frigates at short notice, in the event of a war with a maritime power, to protect our coast and transport troops with the utmost facility, under the management of officers and men who have become familiar with this description of navigation. This is the power that is to command the highway of nations, and shall we be the last to assert our rights in it?

THE BRITANNIA.—This steamer was raised on the sectional dock on Saturday. Her injuries appear to be both extensive and severe. It has been found that the false keel is carried away from the stern to about the middle, and that the keel is so much damaged as to require the removal of about fifty feet. The sheathing, which is very thick, is broken off about twenty-five feet. The copper in some places is rubbed up. It is expected the necessary repairs will be completed on Wednesday next.—*N. Y. Com. Adv.*

DEPTH OF THE OCEAN.—At the annual meeting of the Association of American Geologists and Naturalists sitting in Boston, Commander WILKES, United States Navy, made a communication upon the subject of the depth and saltness of the ocean. The maximum depth has never been attained. Captain Ross sounded 4,600 fathoms, about 27,000 feet, and got no bottom. There are great difficulties attending deep sea soundings. Bottom has been obtained in 2,000 or 3,000 fathoms. Experiments show that the great valleys of the ocean run at right angles to the ranges near our coast. The basins of the southern hemisphere dip and rise alternately from the equator towards the pole, causing very unequal depths of water. Captain Wilkes hoped that some means would yet be discovered to sound by means of the explosion of a shell.

The mean temperature of the ocean is 39.5; in latitude from 41 to 60 south, the temperature is the same at the top and bottom. It has been asserted, as the result of experiments, that the mean temperature of the Mediterranean is 55 degrees.

Experiments were made by Captain Wilkes upon the penetration of solar light. A pot painted white was let down into the water, and the point of invisibility marked; upon taking it out, the point of visibility was marked, and the two were found to vary but a fathom or two. In water at 36 degrees, the pot disappeared at six fathoms; in water at 76 degrees, at thirty fathoms; in the Gulf Stream, at twenty-seven fathoms; just outside of it, at twenty-three fathoms.

MACHINE FOR MAKING PAPER BRICKS.—Among the great variety of specimens of American ingenuity on exhibition at the mechanics' fair at Boston none excels in utility that above mentioned. Brick is an indispensable article, and if any machine can be devised to diminish the expense and the time consumed in the ordinary mode of its preparation for the kiln, such invention is worthy of the patronage of all the small and large capitalists of the country. The common process is a slow one, requiring the employment of many hands and much division of labor. This machine receives the clay in two open tubs at the top, the clay being just moist enough in its natural state for adhesion, pulverizes it, and presses it under small expense, and is used in its structure and simple in its operation. It can be worked by half the number of hands which are employed to make coarse brick; and is the production of A. Woodward, Worcester, Mass.—*Boston paper.*

ON THE ORIGIN OF THE WAR.

LETTERS OF JOHN P. KENNEDY

To the Citizens of the Fourth Congressional District, and particularly to the Mechanics and Workmen of that District of both Political Parties.—[CONTINUED.]

In these letters I have shown you the objections taken by certain prominent leaders of the Democratic party against a treaty of annexation, and that these objections referred exclusively to the extent of territory claimed by Texas.

You will see, from what I am now about to lay before you, that before Texas could be annexed the Administration and its friends were compelled virtually to disavow any purpose of taking more territory than was included in the old boundaries of Texas, unless by the consent of Mexico herself; in other words, that Congress would not agree to annex Texas with her boundary on the Rio Grande.

The treaty was rejected, as I have said, on the 8th of June, 1846. On the 11th of June the President sent a message to the House of Representatives, informing them of the fact of the rejection by the Senate, and, in effect, asking them to take up the subject in the way of ordinary legislation. This message was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and nothing was done during the remainder of that session. In this message the President refers to the boundary question, and says of it that it was "purposely left open for negotiation with Mexico, as affording the best opportunity for the most friendly and pacific arrangements."

At the next session of Congress, in December, 1846, the question of annexation was immediately resumed.

On the 11th of December Mr. Benton reported a bill for the annexation, in which he provided that the Government should be "authorized and advised to open negotiations with Mexico and Texas for the adjustment of boundaries," and for the annexation of the latter, amongst others, on the following terms as regarded boundary:

"1st. The boundary of the annexed territory to be in the desert prairie west of the Nueces, and along the highlands and mountain-heights which divide the waters of the Mississippi from the waters of the Rio del Norte, said to latitude 42° north."

This is what Mr. Benton proposed that we should open negotiations to obtain from Mexico.

This boundary of the desert prairie between the Nueces and the Rio Grande Mr. Benton had previously brought to the notice of the Senate as that which was recommended by General Jackson in 1823. In his speech upon that point he said:

"That proposition of General Jackson did not go the length of this treaty (the treaty of annexation, upon which he was speaking) by two thousand miles. It stopped at the mountains which lie at the head of the Red river and the Arkansas, and which divide the ancient Louisiana from New Mexico and the desert prairie which lies to the west of the Nueces. His proposition included no part of New Mexico, Chihuahua, Coahuila, or Tamaulipas. It extended to no part of the river or even of the valley of the Rio del Norte. Not a drop of the water of that river, not an inch of the soil of its valley, did he propose to disrupt from its old possessor and to incorporate into our Union."

In accordance with these views of the respective rights of Mexico and the United States in this matter of boundary, Mr. Benton's bill proposed, as you have seen, that we should negotiate for a boundary in the desert which lies immediately west of the Nueces. Of course he was satisfied, before he made this proposition, that Texas had no actual right beyond the Nueces. A vast desert lies between that river and the Rio del Norte, which Mr. Benton thought a good natural boundary, and worth negotiating for with Mexico.

At the same time, or the next day after Mr. Benton offered this proposition in the Senate, the Committee on Foreign Relations in the House, by Mr. Charles J. Ingersoll, their chairman, reported joint resolutions for the annexation. These were followed by a number of propositions for the same purpose, which were offered, almost daily for several days, by different members. A long debate took place, in the course of which Mr. Charles J. Ingersoll, speaking on this subject of the boundary—which I have shown you produced so much objection to the treaty—took occasion to explain the views of the Committee on Foreign Relations and of the Executive on that point. He said:

"The territorial limits are marked in the configuration of this continent by an Almighty hand. The Plate, the Arkansas, the Red, and the Mississippi rivers are naturally our waters, with their estuaries in the Bay of Mexico. The desolate deserts between the Nueces and the Rio Bravo (the Rio Grande) are the natural boundaries between the Anglo-Saxon and the Maorian races. There ends the valley of the West. There Mexico begins."

In the same speech he apprizes the House that he has authority for saying that there will be no difficulty with Mexico—that we should be able to buy her consent to the cession we desired:

"I am happy," is his language, "to be authorized to assure this House that those best acquainted with the true state of things apprehend little or no danger of war. The main sinew of war, money, will heal the breach and end the controversy amicably."

This quotation from the speech of the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations will enable you to understand precisely what Mr. Calhoun meant when, on the 10th of September previous, he wrote this language to Mr. Shannon, our Minister in Mexico:

"You are instructed to renew the declaration made to the Mexican Secretary by our Chargé d'Affaires, in announcing the conclusion of the treaty, that the measure was adopted in a spirit of hostility to Mexico, and that, if annexation should be consummated, the United States will be prepared to adjust all questions growing out of it, including that of boundary, on the most liberal terms."

Can any one doubt, after reviewing these facts, that our Government had pledged itself to abstain from claiming any boundary that would be offensive to Mexico, and particularly to make no claim founded on the limits set forth in the Texas act of Congress. Can any one doubt that Congress was unwilling to insist upon the Rio Grande (or Del Norte) as a rightful boundary?

We shall see the determination of Congress, in reference to this question, more fully developed in what eventually took place.

Of the several propositions for annexation which were offered in the House of Representatives, that of Mr. Brown, of Tennessee, was finally adopted. On the 13th of January, 1846, Mr. Brown offered his resolutions as a substitute for those of the committee. They began in this way:

Resolved, "That Congress do consent that the territory properly included within and rightfully belonging to the Republic of Texas may be created into a new State," &c.; and "that the foregoing consent is given on the following conditions," to wit:

"Said State shall be formed, subject to the adjustment by this Government of all questions of boundary that may arise with other Governments," &c.

On the 25th of January these resolutions were passed in the House of Representatives by a vote of 119 to 97, and on the next day passed the Senate without alteration in any material point.

Now I pause here in my narrative to ask you to remark the very guarded phraseology of these joint resolutions by which it was agreed to annex Texas. They say "the territory properly included within and rightfully belonging to the Republic of Texas." Why was this language inserted? Several of the resolutions proposed by others in the House did not contain it. Congress would not agree to those other resolutions, but adopted those only which contained this language. Why did Congress also insist upon a condition that the State of Texas should be formed "subject to the adjustment by this Government of all questions of boundary that might arise with other Governments?" What other Government was there? None but Mexico with whom we could have any difficulty. What was that difficulty? The pretension set up by Texas to extend her boundary to the Rio Grande. It was a right to that boundary, what had we to adjust with Mexico? Nothing. If Texas had this right, what do those resolutions mean by laying such stress upon the words "territory properly included within and rightfully belonging to the Republic of Texas?" Manifestly they mean that the Republic of Texas had made pretensions to territory not "properly included within" nor "rightfully belonging to" it.

But, as if the Congress of the United States was determined to express the most unequivocal dissent from the pretensions of Texas, as made known in her act of Congress of 1836, and to repudiate the notion that Texas by that act had any claim to the boundary of the Rio Grande, they passed a law at this very same session, which is entitled "An act allowing a drawback upon foreign merchandise exported in the original packages to Chihuahua and Santa Fe, in Mexico."

This bill was passed in the House of Representatives on the 21st of February, nearly a month after the passage of the resolutions for annexation, and was amended, with a view to include another foreign country, by adding the words, "and the British North American provinces adjoining to the United States."

Now, the object of this bill was to entitle any merchant who should import goods into the United States to have the duties refunded to him if he exported them in the original packages to Santa Fe, in Mexico; as it undoubtedly was. Yet Congress had, just a month before they passed this bill, agreed to annex Texas to this Union, and Texas had, by her act of Congress of 1836, extended her limits to the Rio Grande, by which she included Santa Fe. It is clear, therefore, from this fact alone—if it were not still more clear from the whole history of the case which I have given you—that Congress had no idea of recognizing the claim of Texas to the Rio Grande, but, on the contrary, directly and unequivocally repelled that claim, and refused in any way to allow it.

This is all that I have to bring before you touching the history of the annexation. What I have submitted to you shows clearly and beyond all dispute—

1st. That Texas proper—and by that I mean the Texas which revolved against Mexico and secured her independence—did not extend to the Rio Grande.

2d. That the treaty for annexation was rejected because it was supposed to give color to claim to extend Texas to the Rio Grande.

3d. That the Government disavowed any purpose to assert a claim to the Rio Grande; but, on the contrary, desired to open a negotiation with Mexico for the purchase of that boundary.

4th. That the joint resolutions upon which finally Texas was annexed carefully provided against taking any territory that did not rightfully belong to Texas.

5th, and lastly, That Congress, by the most explicit act of legislation in relation to the drawback, announced that the country included within the new limits of Texas, and beyond the old limits, was a foreign country belonging to Mexico, and that consequently the territory on the Rio Grande did not "rightfully belong" to the Republic of Texas.

I am now prepared to speak of the manner in which this Mexican war began, and to examine the question how far Mr. Polk acted in accordance with his powers and duties, under the constitution, in reference to that matter.

Mr. Polk was inaugurated on the 4th of March, 1845. You will now perceive that the moment this affair of the annexation came into his hands, he gave it an essentially new direction. He determined to pay no regard to the considerations upon which Texas was admitted to the Union, and to recognise no pledge which the proceedings of the last Administration and of Congress had given to Mexico upon the subject of the boundary.

Before the annexation was agreed upon it is true Mexico had said she would consider it as an act of war upon her, and Mr. Polk, I feel, was bound to be prepared for such an event. I think it was in the highest sense his duty to be well prepared for a war if Mexico should act upon her threat.

A convention was to meet in Texas on the 4th of July, 1845, to consider our propositions for annexation. That convention did meet, and ratified the proceeding. Previous, however, to the meeting of this convention, that is to say on the 28th of May, the President ordered Gen. Taylor to move with his little army towards Texas.

There seems now to have been some private understanding between Mr. Polk and the Government of Texas that, without regarding what had passed in our Government in reference to the boundary and its refusal to assert a claim to the Rio Grande, Mr. Polk and his Cabinet should nevertheless assert that claim, and thenceforth act upon it as a matter of established right. This will be seen in what follows.

On the 15th of June Mr. Bancroft, acting as Secretary of War, informs Gen. Taylor "the point of your ultimate destination is the western frontier of Texas, where you will select and occupy in or near the Rio Grande del Norte such a site as will be best adapted to repel invasion, and to protect what is in the event of annexation will be our western border."

Here is the first bold and open avowal of a purpose on the part of the new Administration to disregard what may be considered as the pledged faith of the nation on the question of the boundary.

The private understanding to which I have alluded I think will be seen in the correspondence between Mr. Allen, the Secretary of State of Texas, and Mr. Donelson, our agent there. Mr. Allen, in a letter of the 26th of June, eleven days later than Mr. Bancroft's order, suggests to Mr. Donelson "the propriety and necessity of an immediate introduction of the troops, and that they proceed at once to occupy positions on the Rio Grande."

Mr. Donelson gives no countenance to this proposition, and apprizes Mr. Allen what instructions he had been hitherto directed to communicate to Gen. Taylor. Amongst those instructions are the following:

"The occupation of the country between the Nueces and the Rio Grande you are aware is a disputed question. Texas holds Corpus Christi, Mexico holds the Brazos del St. Jago near the mouth of the Rio Grande." "You can safely hold possession of Corpus Christi and all other points up to the Nueces, and, if Mexico attempts to dislodge you, drive her beyond the Rio Grande."

Notwithstanding this, that Mr. Donelson was directed to say to Gen. Taylor in an early stage of this movement, that the boundary to the Rio Grande was "a disputed question," Mr. Bancroft's instructions to the General, you perceive, are to take possession to the Rio Grande, as that, "in the event of annexation, will be our western border."

This is clearly a very summary prejudgment of the "disputed question." At this point the violation of the terms of the annexation seems to have become the settled purpose of the Cabinet. We were henceforth to assert our claim to the borders of the Rio Grande, and maintain it by force.

The subsequent orders which Gen. Taylor received establish that determination. Let us look to a few of them, and the events with which they were connected.

The Government was conscious that the only ground upon which there could be made the slightest justification of this attempt to seize the disputed territory, as they chose to call it, although it had not the benefit even of a plausible dispute, was that the territory beyond the Nueces was in the actual occupation of the people of Texas. So far as regarded a few settlements on the west bank of the Nueces, this was true, and those settlers might be said to be under the protection of Texas. This was the case at Corpus Christi, immediately at the mouth of the Nueces and on its western margin. But beyond the actual border of the river, there were no settlers, whilst over towards the Rio Grande and on its banks there dwelt a considerable number of Mexican citizens, who had long resided in this section of Tamaulipas. The country between the two rivers, embracing a width of about one hundred and thirty miles, was chiefly a desert. Brasas Santiago and Point Isabel were Mexican settlements, and no Americans dwelt in that region.

With these facts before him, Mr. Marcy writes to General Taylor, on the 30th of July: "You are expected to occupy, protect, and defend the territory of Texas to the extent that it has been occupied by the people of Texas," which, in point of fact, as Mr. Donelson had written to the Department, was nowhere further west than Corpus Christi and the west bank of the Nueces. But Mr. Marcy's letter goes on to say:

"The Rio Grande is claimed to be the boundary between the two countries, and up to this boundary you are to extend your protection, only excepting any points on the eastern side thereof, which are in the actual occupancy of Mexican forces, or Mexican settlements over which the Republic of Texas did not exercise jurisdiction at the period of annexation, or shortly before that event."

It would appear that General Taylor, acting in pursuance of this order, chose Corpus Christi and the immediate bank of the Nueces as the only country coming within the description of the Secretary's direction, because that was the whole extent occupied by the people of Texas, and all the rest was in the actual occupancy, as it always had been, of the Mexicans. Mr. Donelson had, in fact, written to the General, as we have noticed before, on the 28th of June, telling him that "Corpus Christi was the most western point then occupied by Texas." And we may presume the General knew this as well as Mr. Donelson. The General reached Corpus Christi some time in August. On the 30th of October he writes: "Before the President's instructions of the 30th of July reached me, I would have preferred a position on the left bank of the river," (the Nueces.) He adds, however, that

his position on the right bank (Corpus Christi) had more advantages than the other. His meaning evidently was, that, if he had not been directed to go into "the disputed territory," he would have taken his position on the left bank, as being within the actual and true boundary of Texas. He then says: "One or two suitable points on or near the Rio Grande" should be taken possession of, if the line of the Rio Grande is determined on as "the ultimatum" by our Government. He leaves that question for the President to settle; and gives his advice as a military man as to what should be done if the President's determination should be to occupy the country in dispute.

The letter of Mr. Marcy, (30th July, 1845,) above referred to, is important in this narrative as establishing one fact, namely, that the Government knew, at the time they were issuing these orders, that the country on the Rio Grande, and between that and the Nueces, was, as far as it was capable of occupation, in the actual occupancy of Mexican forces and Mexican inhabitants or settlers, and that it was not pretended that these settlers were under the jurisdiction of Texas, or ever had been under it. They were inhabitants who belonged to the State of Tamaulipas, and exclusively under the jurisdiction of Mexico. This was known to our Government.

General Taylor remained at Corpus Christi all through the autumn of 1845 and the winter of 1846. There was no invasion attempted by Mexico, and a general belief prevailed that we should soon have a settlement of all difficulties between the two countries. Our Government had made application to Mexico to know if she would open negotiations for the settlement of the disputed questions. She answered favorably to this proposition. Mr. Slidell was appointed Minister Plenipotentiary to go to Mexico. Mexico offered to receive a Minister, on the ground that the question of Texas and the boundary must be settled before she could acknowledge the existence of full relations of amity with us. She offered, therefore, to receive a Commissioner, to treat specially on those questions, and no others. Our Government would not consent to indulge her in this demand, although it has since that time sent a Commissioner for pretty much the same purpose, in the person of Mr. Trist. I do not excuse Mexico for this refusal to receive our Minister. It was a very frivolous piece of false pride, but very much in character with all her other follies connected with this quarrel. But certainly this refusal to receive a Minister was war.

On the 13th of January, 1846, whilst this question of the reception of the Minister was yet pending, and before it was known whether Mexico would receive him or not, and at a time when there was no expectation of an invasion from Mexico—and, more to be noted than any thing else, at a time when the Congress of the United States was in session, the President, privately, without communicating any syllable to Congress, or giving any hint of the event to either branch of the National Legislature, to whom alone the constitution has confided the great and momentous power of making war; in these circumstances, and on this day, Mr. Polk authorized Mr. Marcy to write to Gen. Taylor, "I am directed by the President to instruct you to advance and occupy, with the troops under your command, positions on or near the east bank of the Rio del Norte as soon as it can conveniently be done, with reference to the season and routes by which your movements must be made. From the views heretofore presented to this Department, it is presumed Point Isabel will be considered by you an eligible position; this point, or some one near it, and points opposite Matamoros and Mier, and in the vicinity of Laredo, are suggested to your consideration."

Can any friend of Mr. Polk answer the question, why Congress was not consulted when this decisive step was taken? Here was a clear, unequivocal repudiation of all our previous pledges in regard to the question of the boundary to the Rio del Norte. Here was an order to occupy a country which it was admitted was under the jurisdiction of Mexico, and in which a Mexican town, on the left or eastern bank of the Rio del Norte—the town of Laredo, containing fifteen hundred inhabitants—was specially designated as one of the positions for the army; here was, in short, an invasion of Mexico—just such an invasion as every civilized nation would regard as an act of war. Suppose the case reversed, and Mexico had directed her troops to advance to the Nueces, and to occupy a position which should command one of the villages of Texas, what would this country have thought of it? Need I ask? The declaration would have been universal that Mexico had begun the war by an act of flagrant aggression. And yet certainly Mexico had quite as much right to seize upon the disputed territory as we had—if Mr. Benton's opinion is worth anything, a much better right.

On the 10th of March, 1846, Gen. Taylor, in obedience to these orders, commenced his march from Corpus Christi to the Rio Grande. He arrived at that river on the 28th, and encamped opposite Matamoros. What he did when he arrived there, you will read in his official despatch. On the 6th of April the General writes: "On our side a battery of four eighteen pounders will be completed, and the guns placed in battery to-day. These guns bear directly upon the public square of Matamoros, and within good range for demolishing the town. THEIR OBJECT CANNOT BE MISTAKEN BY THE ENEMY!" Remember, that when that letter was written there had been no collision—not a shot had been fired—not a man made prisoner.

And yet we are told that this act was not an act of war!—that this marching of an army into what we are pleased to call "disputed territory," but which confessedly was, and always had been, in the actual occupancy of the people of Mexico and under the jurisdiction of that country—this marching of an army there—this pointing of cannon into the very homes of the inhabitants of Matamoros, the capital of Tamaulipas, was not an act of war! Collisions ensued. How could it be otherwise, with these guns pointing into the windows of Matamoros? Armies were in motion, and it was not long until blood was spilt. What a pitiful and unmanly evocation was it for the President to say, after this aggression on his part, that war exists by the act of Mexico! He had failed in his duty when he failed to submit the question of invasion, which was a question of war, to Congress. And when he found that he had brought our little army into peril by it, it was a mere trick, to rid himself of the responsibility he had so rashly assumed, to throw the blame of the war upon Mexico.

These letters have grown too long to allow me much space for comment on these transactions, and as I prefer Democratic authority in this matter to any other, I shall close this narrative of the events which belong to the origin of the war by a few extracts from a distinguished writer on the Democratic side, who was once the editor of a Democratic magazine, and who, as these extracts will show, was a friend and supporter of Mr. Polk's election.

I quote some passages from an article in Brownson's Quarterly Review on the Mexican war, published in July last, and written by Mr. Brownson himself:

"For ourselves," he says, "we have regarded the Mexican war as uncalled for, impolitic, and unjust. We have examined the documents published by order of the Government. We have read the official defence of the war in the last annual message of the President to Congress, and with every disposition to find our Government in the right; but we are bound to say that our original impressions have been strengthened rather than weakened."

"The act of Mexico in crossing the Rio Grande and engaging our troops on territory which she had possessed and still claimed as hers, but which we asserted had, by a recent act against which she